

Teachers' Interpersonal Communication Strategies in TEFL at a Senior High School in Makassar

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ABSTRACT

The study attempted to reveal the interpersonal communication strategies used by female and male teacher in TEFL at a senior high school and the students' perception towards teachers' interpersonal communication strategies. The respondents consisted of a female and a male English teacher and 38 students who were taken from six different classes at a Senior High School. This research was conducted through qualitative method. The instruments were classroom observation and interview. The data gathered was analyzed through qualitative data analysis proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), namely data collection, data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing. The result of data analysis showed that EFL teachers of a Senior High School use 18 verbal interpersonal communication strategies and 13 nonverbal interpersonal communication strategies. Moreover, in TEFL, one-way communication is not teachers' favourable communication strategy in teaching high school students. The data also showed that there is no different perception among female and male students towards female and male teachers' verbal interpersonal communication strategies in TEFL. Another case with the teachers' nonverbal interpersonal communication strategies, female students are more comfortable when touched and approached by female teachers, while male students are more comfortable when touched and approached by male teachers. These discrepancies suggest that the teacher should consider the students' culture and preference while using interpersonal communication strategy in teaching EFL at Senior High School.

Keywords: students, teachers, IPC strategy, TEFL

INTRODUCTION

English is inevitably important to be entangled in education. It could not be denied that mastering English language is becoming urgent to everyone who wants to let with the world flow, in terms of technology, business, job, society,

education and so forth. In Indonesia, English language becomes a compulsory subject at Junior High School, Senior High School, and University where English in Indonesia as foreign language. All parties will agree that the qualities of teachers, teaching material, condition of students, and learning environment become the focal core in TEFL where classroom is the most common setting in educational process.

In teaching and learning process, the interactions carried out by teachers and students where the teacher plays three interrelated roles, namely as manager, instructor and administrator. It captures that teacher and students communicate intensively in teaching and learning process. Nurturing the communication during the class is important. This core served in the field of interpersonal communication. Simply, interpersonal communication is face to face communication which allowing verbal and nonverbal responses directly and the communicator are having social relationship, e.g. parent and their daughter/son, employer and employee, teacher and students and so forth.

Interpersonal communication is important in a teaching and learning process. According to Gablinske (2014) interpersonal communication is essential to support the communication within classroom. A good interpersonal communication will create positive relationship between teacher and students that minimizes the gap within teaching and learning process such as, distrust, anxiety, boring, suspicion among them and so forth. Otherwise, negative relationship causes the gap that leads to ineffective learning. Thus, teacher considering what to do and what to say in EFL classroom reveals as a must.

In teaching and learning process, teachers are facing many characters and level of students. In Senior High School level, teaching the students in this level are quite challenging. The students are stepping in the process of adolescent phase. According to Erikson (1968) adolescence is crisis of identity phase. It means students in the phase of seeking self identity are being emotionally unstable which will be reflected in their ways of thinking and attitude in their daily life.

To enable positive interaction or to create conducive learning atmosphere while teaching high school students, teachers should consider interpersonal communication strategy which appropriate with the students. Interpersonal communication strategy is overall decision that is conditional about what ways of communication to be executed in order achieving the goal in teaching. Interpersonal communication strategy is important because teachers while communicating needs to consider the purpose and the communicant, e.g. Communicating with kindergarten students in teaching and learning process will be different while communicating with high school students.

In classroom context, the researcher realizes that the interpersonal communication strategy is far different with other social context. In the context of interaction between teacher and students, teachers use verbal and nonverbal code in teaching which is to deliver both instructional and transactional message which serving two

functions namely pedagogical and communicative function. Thus, the way teacher teaches the content of the subject would be important to be concerned. The present study, interpersonal communication strategy refers to preferred ways of communication that EFL teachers used in the process of teaching and learning.

Since, interpersonal communication strategy takes focal core in EFL classroom teaching, perception is becoming factor to consider. It is positioned as barometer of the teaching and learning process quality. Many scholars have proven that students' perception toward their teachers is able to influence the quality of learning in classroom. Perception is the impression gained by an individual through the senses then will be analyzed, interpreted and then evaluated, so that individuals acquire meaning. Robbins (2003: 97). Thus, the students' perception cannot be discarded from discussion. It is to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers' interpersonal communication strategy.

Moreover, there is also a case usually associated with the issue of interpersonal communication. That is gender. Gender refers to the psychological and social manifestations of being male or female. A lot of people attention has been devoted to the idea that women and men communicate very differently, this concept is supported by Tannen (1990) and Wood (1989) in Benokraitis (1996) that woman and men are different in their interpersonal communication.

In education, research about gender usually takes teacher or student as the subject of study, e.g. Gender related to student's learning style. Female and male are believed to be different, one of them in term of their interpersonal communication. Some scholars found that men and women at work place are different both verbally and nonverbally in their interpersonal communication. Those differences are believed potentially create misunderstanding in interpreting messages between them. Since, EFL classroom comprises women and men who are communicating between teachers to students, students to teachers or students to students, issue of gender in classroom communication is important to be studied.

Based on the previous illustration, the objectives of this study were to find out:

- (1) Verbal and nonverbal interpersonal communication strategies used by a female English teacher in TEFL at Senior High School.
- (2) Verbal and nonverbal interpersonal communication strategies used by a male English teacher in TEFL at Senior High School.
- (3) The students' perceptions towards their English teachers' interpersonal communication strategies in TEFL.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There have been some studies on interpersonal communication in the field of education and issues of gender toward interpersonal communication. Rasyid (2015) conducted a research concerning with sight of college students toward EFL lecturers' verbal and nonverbal interpersonal communication that inspire while lecturing. He revealed that some lecturers' verbal and nonverbal interpersonal communications were not inspiring the students in lecturing process. The uninspired lecturers' verbal interpersonal communication were telling students his/her personal experiences, confirmed the students' reasons for being late, students were asked to tell their personal experience in English, and allowing the students calling their lectures first name. Moreover, the uninspired lecturers' nonverbal interpersonal communications were moving around while lecturing, shaking hands, and coming closer to the students while lecturing.

Maulana et al, (2014) conducted a research concerning with whether or not teacher and students interpersonal relationship effect students academic motivation in learning, specifically in English and Math. The study invoved 504 secondary students in Indonesia. The results revealed that students and teachers interpersonal relationship is positively build and encourage the students motivation and interest in learning.

Interpersonal communication related with gender, Mohindra and Azhar (2012) comducted a research concerning with women and men interpersonal communication at work place. The result appeared that both gender have differences in their interpersonal communication in some ways such as, dominancy in talking, using verbal and nonverbal cues, topics to be duscussed/content of the conversation, and giving respond.

McQuiston and Morris (2009) conducted a research concerning with issue of interpersonal communication and gender differences in the field of sales. The result revealed that male and female sales were different in their intepersonal communication in some ways such as, words chosen, dominance/talking time, responding, directing, and so forth.

From the findings concerning with interpersonal communication in teaching context and interpersonal communication toward gender, the researcher interpreted that teachers need interpersonal communication strategy in teaching and learning and gender plays roles on interpersonal communication. The researchers who studied about interpersonal communication in teaching found that interpersonal communication is needed to build good relationship, encourage students' motivation, interest, and students' achievement in teaching and learning process. Moreover, the researchers who studied about interpersonal

communication and gender in workplace found that women and men are different in their interpersonal communication. The researcher proposes a difference among the mentioned researchers. This study focuses on teachers' interpersonal communication strategy in EFL classroom at high school, teachers' gender and interpersonal communication at EFL classroom, and students' perception toward their English teachers' interpersonal communication strategy used.

METHOD

This study employed qualitative research method. The aims of this research were to find out what interpersonal communication strategies that used by EFL teachers in high school, teachers' gender and their interpersonal communication strategies in EFL classroom, and students' perception towards their English teachers' interpersonal communication strategies in teaching.

The data were taken from two sources namely, a female and a male EFL teachers at a favorite high school in Makassar, as well as the students that they taught. In this study, a female and a male teacher had been chosen based on their willingness; Ms. AF (43) and Mr.AR (53). The students that had been entangled in the direct observation were also involved to be the data sources. The total students involved were 38 students, they were chosen randomly from six different classes.

Two kinds of instruments were used to collect the data, namely classroom observation and interview. Classroom observation with video tape recording was used to get the data about female and male teachers' interpersonal communication strategies in TEFL at a high school. The classroom observation had been conducted five times for each teacher. Interview with audio recording was used to get the data about students' perception and teachers' confirmation about the data from the recorded video in order to give appropriate interpretation. The data gathered was analyzed through qualitative data analysis proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), namely data collection, data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Teacher's Interpersonal Communication Strategies

The teachers used verbal and nonverbal interpersonal communication strategies in TEFL. The researcher figures the data found into form of tables in order readers easy interpret the data.

Table 1 Female and Male Teacher Verbal IPC Strategies

No	Verbal Interpersonal Communication Strategy	Female Teacher		Male Teacher	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1.	Greeting students when entering the class	√		√	
2.	Checking students' attendance	√		√	
3.	Praying before starting the lesson	√		√	
4.	Thanking	√		√	
5.	Apologizing	√			√
6.	Letting students to choose something on their own	√			√
7.	Encouraging students	√		√	
8.	Giving wise words before starting the lesson		√	√	
9.	Addressing students by calling them 'ananda' or 'nak'		√	√	
10.	Inserting humor while teaching		√	√	
11.	Admonishing while students interrupting the class	√		√	
12.	Asking students get hurry while doing their work	√			√
13.	Using English language dominantly while teaching	√			√
14.	Using Indonesian language dominantly while teaching		√	√	
15.	Checking students' comprehension by asking question	√		√	
16.	Asserting important information while teaching	√		√	
17.	Doing confirmation while teaching	√		√	
18.	Making note on the white board	√			√
19.	Conducting a game	√			√

Based on the table 1, both female and male teachers used verbal interpersonal communication strategy in teaching EFL. The table 1 shows that both female and male teacher were greeting the students when entering the class, checking students' attendance, praying before starting the lesson, thanking, encouraging students, admonishing while students interrupting the class, asking students get

hurry while doing their work, checking students' comprehension by asking question, asserting important information while teaching, and doing confirmation while teaching.

The table 1 also shows that there are verbal interpersonal communication strategies that female teacher used and vice verse. The verbal interpersonal communication that female teacher used were apologizing, letting students to choose something on their own, making note on the white board, using English language dominantly while teaching and conducting a game. On the other hand, verbal interpersonal communication that male teacher used were inserting humor while teaching, giving wise words before starting the lesson, addressing students by calling them 'ananda' or 'nak', and using Indonesian language dominantly while teaching.

Related with the differences between female and male in their interpersonal communication, it is found that female teacher was apologizing while the male teacher was inserting humor in teaching. Both are supported by Tannen theory (1990) about male and female differences in interpersonal communication.

Meanwhile, the data found concerning with the female and male teacher's nonverbal interpersonal communication strategies is shown in the table 2.

Table 2 Female and Male Teacher Nonverbal IPC Strategies

No	Nonverbal Interpersonal Communication Strategy	Female Teacher		Male Teacher	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1.	Being enthusiastic in teaching	√		√	
2.	Looking at the class while teaching	√		√	
3.	Smiling at the class while talking	√		√	
4.	Dressing neatly	√		√	
5.	Having a relax body posture while talking to the class	√		√	
6.	Having eye contact when talking to the students	√		√	
7.	Coming closer to the students	√		√	
8.	Standing in the front middle class	√			√
9.	Moving around while teaching		√	√	
10.	Tapping students' shoulder		√	√	
11.	Showing attention while student speaking	√		√	
12.	Using variety tone in teaching	√		√	
13.	Using gesture while talking to the class	√		√	

Based on the table above, it shows that male and female English teachers used nonverbal interpersonal communication strategy in teaching EFL. The table 2 shows that the female and male teacher were being enthusiastic in teaching, looking at the class while teaching, smiling at the class while talking, dressing neatly, having a relax body posture while talking to the class, having eye contact when talking to the students, showing attention while student speaking, using variety tone in teaching, using gesture while talking to the class, and coming closer to the students.

The table 2 also shows that there are the nonverbal interpersonal communication strategies that female teacher used and vice verse. The nonverbal interpersonal communication strategies that female teacher used was standing in the front middle class. On the other hand, nonverbal interpersonal communication strategies that male teacher used were moving around while teaching and tapping students' shoulder. Related with the issues of nonverbal interpersonal communication toward gender, there was no difference found between female and male teacher while implementing nonverbal interpersonal communication during the teaching and learning period.

The data found concerning with teachers' communication strategies in TEFL are shown in the table 3.

Table 3 Teachers' Communication Strategies

No	Communication Strategy	Teacher 1		Teacher 2	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1.	One-way Communication		√		√
2.	Two-way Communication	√		√	
3.	Multi-way Communication	√		√	

Based on the table 3, it shows that both teachers applied communication strategy while teaching. The table 3 also shows that both female and male teacher was applying two-way and multi-way communication in teaching EFL instead of one-way communication. Implementing the two-way communication, the teachers did it while giving explanation, while the students work individually and while the students worked in a group. Meanwhile, implementing the multi-way communication, the teachers tended to pair/group the students in the teaching and learning process. Involving the students to be active in the teaching and learning process was the main reasons of the teachers.

Students' Perception on Teachers' IPC Strategies

Perception of the students was figured into two points. There were four generated theory proposed by Devito (1997) and the teachers' verbal and nonverbal interpersonal communication strategy used in TEFL.

There are four generated categories proposed by Devito (1997) namely openness, supportiveness, empathy, positive feeling, and equality. The researcher gathered the students' perception toward teachers' openness, supportiveness, empathy, positive feeling, and equality by interviewing the students.

Openness, the teacher is expected to be opened to his/her students in the teaching and learning process teaching. Based on the result of interviewing the students, the students have expectation that their teacher will be associating with them, listening when they are talking, being closed with their students, accepting student's opinion, being pleased if the students asking, giving more explanation to the student who has not understood the lesson yet, giving good respond after students speaking, answering students 'question well, correcting the students in polite manner, welcoming if students disagrees with their teacher, sharing stories with their students, prioritizing democracy when making decisions and greeting their students.

Empathy, teacher has ability to know what is being experienced by their students at a certain moment while teaching, from the perspective of his/her students person, through the eyes of his/her students. The students have expectation that their teacher are giving games when students are not enthusiastic to learn, confirming students understand or not/ asking if there are students who are having trouble with the lesson, helping the student who have difficulties with the teacher's task, not adding much more task if there are already lots of task, giving time off if students are being tired because of the previous lesson such as sport, paying attention to students while giving explanation, helping students overcome their personal problems, confirming students who are not enthusiasm in class, being care with their students, not forcing students to perform in front of class, paying attention to students' facial expression that they understand/not, happy or not while teaching, calming down when students are being emotional and when students are sad the teachers are showing sadness as well, paying attention to students who are sitting in the back or in the cornered class, and understanding the differences in ability and nature of the students.

Supportiveness, the teacher is being descriptive, spontaneous and provisional, not evaluative, not strategic, and not very confident while communicating. The students have expectation that their teacher are admonishing the students who do something wrong but not in public, giving more value to the active students in the class, gently reprimanding the students and giving them understanding, giving reward to the students who answer question, announcing students' name who do a good task, checking the task and giving correction, displaying in wall the good task of students, giving value objectively/being fair, appreciating and remaining value to the low/average students' tasks, giving a learning contract at the

beginning of the teaching, giving an example when giving explanation, checking the tasks not only doing paraph, making notes related to important points of learning on the board, using English and Indonesian in a balanced way when teaching, approaching student one by one while teaching (checking student work/ explaining), and giving new vocabularies in every meeting.

Positive feeling, the teacher expresses a positive attitude and positively encourage his/her students who become teacher partner in interaction. The students have expectation that their teacher are having kind-hearted, being friendly and humble, smiling, tidying up, grouping students, being enthusiastic while teaching, being relaxed while teaching, playing games while teaching, interacting with their students, listening/seeing/responding while student talking, while students asking the teacher answering, giving praise when students have done something (performing their task), correcting student errors but not degrading, being easy to understand the explanation, inserting humor while teaching, being pretty/handsome, being creative in teaching, explaining the lesson structurally/detail, giving wise word to students, thanking after student doing something, and calling them '*ananda*'.

Equality, both teachers and students are equally valued in an interaction in the teaching and learning process, and that each party has something important to contribute in the teaching and learning process. The students have expectation that their teacher are responding positively to students who giving comment, allowing students to express their opinions/ask, and coming on time while teaching. Vice versa, responding negatively to the students who asking for explanation by asking students to find on their own, treating students were the ones who lower than the teacher in authority, and coming late/leaving class during teaching and learning process.

Moreover, the students' perception towards the teachers' verbal and nonverbal interpersonal communication strategies used, from the data gathered it was found that the students having negative views while teachers' moving around while teaching, tapping students' shoulder and asking students to get hurry. On the other hand, the female high school students were more comfortable when touched and approached by female teachers while male students were more comfortable when touched and approached by male teachers.

The teacher considers students' feelings, needs, thoughts, ideas, wishes and preference is expected to minimize the gap between the teacher and the students in the teaching and learning process. It supported by Santrock (2009:10) students are motivated when they experience something based on their preference.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The verbal IPC strategies used by the English teachers at a high school in Makassar were 1) greeting students when entering the class, 2) checking students' attendance, 3) praying before starting the lesson, 4) thanking, 5) apologizing, 6) letting students to choose something on their own, 7) encouraging students, 8) giving wise words before starting the lesson, 9) addressing students by calling them '*ananda*' or '*nak*', 10) inserting humor while teaching, 11) admonishing while students interrupting the class, 12) asking students get hurry while doing their work, 13) using English/Indonesian language dominantly while teaching 14) checking students' comprehension by asking question, 15) asserting important information while teaching, 16) doing confirmation while teaching, 17) making note on the white board, and 18) conducting a game.

The nonverbal IPC strategies that used by English teachers at a high school in Makassar were 1) being enthusiastic in teaching 2) looking at the class while teaching, 3) smiling at the class while talking, 4) dressing neatly, 5) having a relax body posture while talking to the class, 6) having eye contact when talking to the students, 7) coming closer to the students, 8) standing in the front middle class, 9) moving around while teaching, 10) tapping students' shoulder, 11) showing attention while student speaking, 12) using variety tone (not being monotone) while teaching/speaking, and 13) using gesture while talking to the class.

In communication strategy, two-way and multi-way communications are teachers' favourable strategies to use in teaching EFL at Senior High School instead of one-way communication.

No different perception among students towards female and male teachers' verbal interpersonal communication strategies in TEFL. Another case with the teachers' nonverbal interpersonal communication strategies, female students are more comfortable when touched and approached by female teachers, while male students are more comfortable when touched and approached by male teachers.

There are some findings in this research need to be investigated with larger subject and proven quantitatively to prevent the bias in terms of effectiveness of teachers' interpersonal communication strategies and differences between the female and male teachers' interpersonal communication strategy while teaching. Related with the theory, the researcher found that the female teacher was apologizing while teaching, while the male teacher was inserting a joke. Both are supported by theories about male and female differences in their interpersonal communication. Therefore, further studies are suggested.

The implication of this research can be expected upon teaching in general and TEFL. In teaching for general, this research figures students perception on what teacher should do and should not do while teaching. The teacher should consider using verbal and nonverbal interpersonal communication that is expected by the students. It is meant to minimize the gap between teachers and students in the

process of teaching and learning. In TEFL, it figures that majority students loved to learn English with the teacher who uses English more than Indonesian or using English and Indonesian balance while teaching and conducting game while teaching. Moreover, applying the verbal and nonverbal interpersonal communication strategy, the teacher should consider students' preferences. On the other hand, issues of gender and interpersonal communication in teaching, this research found that the female and male teachers are having difference on conducting interpersonal communication strategy in TEFL. Moreover, based on the female and male students' perception towards the female and male teachers' interpersonal communication strategy, the teacher should consider students' cultures while applying nonverbal interpersonal communication strategy in teaching such as touch and proximity.

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